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UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT

SYMPOSIUM FOR LAND-LOCKED AND TRANSIT DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Policies and actions being taken or envisaged to improve transit transport systems

Contributions by individual countries and by international and intergovernmental organizations

Note by the UNCTAD secretariat

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. Since the publication of UNCTAD/LLDC/SYMP/2, the UNCTAD secretariat received a number of responses which are summarized below:

II. SUMMARIES OF REPLIES RECEIVED FROM INDIVIDUAL COUNTRIES

Argentina

2. In addition to the Paraguay-Parana waterway transport agreement of 30 June 1992 between Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay, the transit transport of Bolivia and Paraguay with Argentina is governed by the following agreements:

(a) with Bolivia

(i) border traffic agreement (17 September 1937)

(ii) agreement establishing a mixed commission for border traffic (18 July 1970); and

(iii) Santa Cruz-Trinidad railway agreement (31 December 1970)

(b) with Paraguay

(i) border waterway transport agreement (31 July 1972)

(ii) land transport agreement (30 October 1992)

Congo

3. The rehabilitation of the transit system is the priority area in the National Transport Plan of Congo. The Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation has taken a number of measures to facilitate the procedures for the movement of transit cargo from the Central African Republic. This initiative is part of the support programme for the subregion, which is sponsored by the European Community and the World Bank.

Mongolia

4. Transit transport operations in Mongolia are governed by bilateral cooperation agreements with China, Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation. Mongolia initiated measures to enhance railway capacity. The Mongolia railway system, which covers 1,800 kms, plays an important role in the movement of transit cargo. Cargo to and from the Russian Federation and Europe is transported via a broad gauge line with no interruption along the routes; however, cargo to and from China and Asian countries needs transshipment. Mongolia is, therefore, taking measures to improve the transshipment facilities at the borders.

5. The implementation of the proposed project of Tumen River Economic Development Area (TREDA), in which Mongolia is participating, will enable Mongolia to use a new port on the Pacific Ocean via China. Furthermore, the planned construction of a more than 3,000 kms railway from the eastern frontier of Mongolia to the city of Biisk in the Russian Federation under the same project is expected to reduce the transit time considerably. A number of projects for upgrading transit roads are also under implementation. This includes a highway connecting the western region of the country with the Russian Federation and China.

III. SUMMARIES OF REPLIES RECEIVED FROM INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) 1/

6. The Economic Commission for Europe plays an important role in trade and transport facilitation. Its work in this area involves the development of legal instruments governing international transport of goods and passages of vehicles.

7. With regard to the international transport of goods, ECE has played a key role in putting in place various international conventions and agreements that regulate rail traffic and international road traffic. A range of procedures for temporary importation, transport of dangerous goods and for border controls of goods have also been developed. The border controls of goods is regulated by the International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods. The Convention covers areas such as customs procedures and other controls, medico-sanitary inspections, veterinary inspection and phyto-sanitary inspection.

8. The facilitation of the passage of road vehicles is governed by international conventions which are supplemented by bilateral agreements. The regulatory measures of this legal regime cover road permits and quotas, temporary importation of vehicles, international motor vehicle insurance, and taxation of road vehicles in international traffic.

9. International transport operations in Europe are regulated by two European Agreements on Road Traffic and on Road Signs and Signals. In addition to these agreements, a large number of multilateral agreements facilitate international road transport in Europe and are concerned, inter alia, with transport documents, liability of road carriers, and civil liability for damages caused during the carriage of dangerous goods. Furthermore, three multilateral infrastructure agreements have been negotiated between the European Governments to facilitate cooperation and coordination among them with regard to the development of homogeneous transport infrastructure. These legal transport systems in Europe constitute useful models, which can be adapted in developing countries.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) 2/

10. The transit transport systems of the land-locked developing countries can only be effectively improved with the cooperation of transit countries. Any proposed changes in transit system must, therefore, take into consideration

the interest of both the land-locked and the transit countries concerned. UNDP's support to land-locked and transit countries is at country or regional level, with capacity-building as the overriding strategic objective of such support. Most national projects and programmes financed by UNDP in the land-locked countries directly or indirectly take into account the particular geographical difficulties of these countries.

IV. SUMMARIES OF REPLIES RECEIVED FROM INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

African Development Bank 3/

11. The Bank has not yet elaborated any specific policy with respect to land-locked and transit countries. However, given that 15 countries out of the Bank's 51 regional member countries are land-locked countries, the Bank has, since its establishment, provided support to the land-locked and transit countries, by financing projects and studies related to transport infrastructure. Particular reference should be made to the Bank's support to the United Nations Transport and Communications Decade in Africa and to the establishment of a reform programme for the Customs and Economic Union of Central Africa (UDEAC). With regard to the future, the Bank will provide special support to private, public and semi-public transport companies whose activities promote the process of economic integration in the region.

Asian Development Bank

12. In the formulation of transport and communications projects, the problems of land-locked developing countries members of the Bank have always been taken into account. In Nepal and Mongolia, the Bank has supported the air transport sector. The Bank also assisted Mongolia in strengthening its international telecommunications links. Through a regional technical assistance for six countries of the greater Mekong subregion, the Bank has identified priority projects to improve transportation among these countries.

13. The Bank's future assistance strategy is to continue its past emphasis on regional cooperation among the member States. Furthermore, the Bank supports the establishment of an effective legal and regulatory framework to govern the development and improvement of transport and communications infrastructure. Future bank assistance to land-locked countries will also include the support for the development of harmonized systems of procedures for handling transit cargo.

International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)

14. The UNDP/ICAO regional project for Asia and the Pacific (RAS/93/032), scheduled to be implemented in 1996, will benefit the land-locked countries of the region. Although there is considerable scope for the development of air freight in these countries, there are still a range of difficulties hindering

the full development of an efficient air freight system. These include: unsuitable, old, or uneconomical aircraft utilized for air freight; absence of bilateral air transport agreements; inefficient ground facilities; under-developed organization and management capabilities for marketing and air freight activities; large imbalance between volume of imports and exports; and lack of coordination and cooperation between neighbouring countries with respect to air freighting.

Notes

1/ The full text of the reply has been issued in UNCTAD/LDC/Misc.34.

2/ The full text of the reply has been issued in UNCTAD/LDC/Misc.35.

3/ The full text of the reply has been issued in UNCTAD/LDC/Misc.33.